

The Week's Plays

THE temperature of the Hudson Theatre on Wednesday night when the audience assembled for the first performance of "The Indestructible Wife" was so cold that not even the animal heat which is supposed to do so much for the B. R. T. or the usual inflammable character of a Hudson comedy could be expected to heat up the building. Imprudent spectators who had checked their coats scrambled back to get them. Others huddled low down in their collars. Whether it was the effect of the play or the increase in fuel, the theatre grew warmer during the evening. But it was too late then. The cold had done its worst. It would be interesting to know how many persons were made seriously ill by the ordeal.

New Yorkers who go to Wednesday matinees now are accustomed to cold theatres. But a cold theatre and a Hudson play together are perhaps more of a test than even the normally healthy first nighters would care to undergo. But the first nighters seem a healthy lot. They turn up every year looking about the same. They keep up the race after pleasure with less signs of breaking than those who are compelled to follow the same dreary course as a profession. Yet a combination of a temperature of 36 degrees and a play by the Hudsons was a strain of their endurance.

Grace George, who seems in a revolution of feeling after the moderate success of "The Indestructible Wife," must thank her stars that she did not have to share the temperature of the Hudson Theatre on Wednesday. It would have been difficult to associate such a role with what Miss George has accomplished in the past, although it is much easier to reconcile the protestations of W. A. Brady against the immoral drama and his participation in the enterprise which enabled New York to see "The Indestructible Wife."

The sense of illusion which is usually a possession of the Hudsons is not so apparent in their latest effort. They usually are able to draw characters which to those entirely ignorant of what the reality may be possess an air of genuineness. Doubtless letter carriers, drug clerks, stenographers, flower merchants and modern dancers regard "Upstairs and Down" as a wonderfully clever picture of that part of New York life that hunts and loafs on Long Island. Probably the house-keeper in The Bronx who does all her work with the aid of a fireless cooker and the delicate dealer down the block regards the views of life below stairs as an equally faithful picture. It seemed to us that "Lombardi, Limited," is just what the interior of any man-dressmaker's establishment must be, although there seemed more salubrity and force about "My Lady's Dress." But we were altogether convinced by the models and the ventures and the rest of the appanage of a great mantua maker in the Hudson play.

Even some opera singers failed to see through "The Great Lover," for some of them went several times and were never undeceived. Caruso has not found out after all these years that what he saw was not at all what he thought it was. Stock brokers, dentists, builders and contractors and extraneous doubtless thought the play contained a perfect picture of operatic life. Thus has it ever been possible for the Hudsons to build up some sort of illusion which is ever stronger in relation to the remoteness of the subject from the spectator.

There is a precious little chance that there will be any illusion of life in the latest play. There was a suggestion of it in the first act. The happy and carefree home, so long free from the presence of the energetic daughter, seemed plausible. Especially well played were the two parents who had been enjoying their months of idleness after so much strenuous discipline from the daughter. She was human enough until she began to get on the nerves of the audience. Then the athletic trainer came, and the rest was all but burlesque.

Another cause for the lesser distinctness in outline was the neutral shade of the characters. The Hudsons have hitherto selected men and women who were strongly impressed in one way or another with the characteristics of their metier. They were of the sign or trade or society—stage society. But there is nothing so distinctive about the figures now on the stage of the Hudson Theatre. The bustling girl, the lisping flirt, the father and mother weary of all the hurry and rush of their home, the athlete—they were the types that stood out. The rest of the play was rather colorless.

It is a sign of the times that the baby's function in the drama has changed altogether. When James Hogue wrote "Margaret Fleming" it was a sign of the times that the baby's function in the drama has changed altogether.

PLAYS THAT LAST.

Astor, "Why Marry?" Be-lasco, "Polly With a Past"; Bijou, "Giri o Mina"; Broadway, "The Madonnas of the Future"; Booth, "Seventeen"; Casino, "Oh, Boy!"; Comedy, "Chis Chow"; Washington Square Players; Cohan & Harris, "A Tailor Made Man"; Cort, "Flo-Flo"; Criterion, Laurette Taylor; Etage, "Business Before Pleasure"; Empire, Ethel Barrymore; Forty-eighth Street, "The Love Mill"; Gaiety, "General Post"; Globe, "Jack o' Lantern"; Hippodrome, "Cheer Up"; Hudson, "The Indestructible Wife"; Knickerbocker, "Josephine"; Lyceum, "Yes or No"; Liberty, "Soling Up"; Lyceum, "Tiger"; Madison Opera House, "Experience"; Maxine Elliott's, "Eyes of Youth"; Morosco, "Lombardi, Ltd."; Newworth Theatre, "Odds and Ends"; Park, "Seven Days Leave"; Playhouse, "The Little Teacher"; Republic, "Parlor, Bedroom and Bath"; Times, "The Gipsy Trail"; Thibault, "Maytime"; Thirty-ninth Street, Lou Tellegen; Winter Garden, "Doing Our Bit"; and Cohan, "The King."



MARY RYAN
in "THE LITTLE TEACHER."

and brought the baby into the climax of the third act, its purpose was altogether uplifting. Producers of pliant face avoided the infant because it was decided that its presence added no element of humor to the proceedings. Philandering that stopped short of the gynological stage was regarded as the most profitable. Now the baby has once more come out of the nursery to become the god from the machine in two of the current plays. And there is a return here to the days of those children who brought about the union of estranged parents, caused the recognition of mother behind the glasses and wig of the governess or talked to father to emphasize his loneliness after mother had eloped. It happened, however, that these were children of a larger growth. They were not of the anatomy to be lifted to the breast.

Now the baby in "The Madonna of the Future" is just in the first months of its furlowled existence. But it is the fruit of all her ambitions. And it is through this baby, which appears in the last act, that she is led to accept the young man who loves her and incidentally happens to be the father of her child. In the last act of "The Indestructible Wife," the baby helps to turn the thoughts of the young woman to more restful occupations than she has been accustomed to. But it is evident that there is to be little change in her way of life.

In spite of its reformatory influence in the two new plays of last week, baby must be rather mortified in tracing his descent from the earlier plays of the '90s through the realistic series that followed "Margaret Fleming" down to the present day.

THE PLAYS OF THE WEEK.

Cohan & Harris will present at the Playhouse to-morrow afternoon "The Little Teacher," by Harry James Smith, with Mary Ryan in the leading role.

Margaret Anglin's matinee series of Greek dramas will begin on Wednesday afternoon in Carnegie Hall in conjunction with Walter Damrosch under the auspices of the Symphony Society of New York.

Favorable reports have been heard of Miss Anglin's productions of Greek dramas in Berkeley, Cal., but her forthcoming matinee will mark her first appearance in New York or anywhere outside of the Greek theatre of the University of California, where she presented "Antigone," "Electra," "Medea" and "Iphigeneia."

Miss Anglin will give here on next Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 Edward Hayes Plumptre's translation of the "Electra" of Sophocles. The tragedy cannot be presented on such a scale as the performances on the vast open air stage of the Greek theatre made possible. It promises, however, to be an extraordinary representation in any respects.

A notable feature will be the musical setting especially composed by Walter Damrosch, which will be interpreted by the New York Symphony Orchestra under the direction of the composer.

The costumes, stage settings and decorations are by Livingston Platt, who

designed Miss Anglin's Greek theatre productions and her Shakespearean revivals. The entire production has been staged under Miss Anglin's direction and the Greek chorus trained and rehearsed under the direction of Mr. Damrosch.

The drama will be interpreted by pupils from Florence Fleming Noyes' school of dancing and choreographic expression.

"The Love Mill," a comic opera, with music by Alfred Harris and libretto by Earl Carroll, will be sung at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre on Thursday.

The last performance of "Tippecanoe" will be given at the Neighborhood Theatre to-night. On next Sunday Edith Wynne Matthison and her company will be seen in "Everyman."

TALK FROM A GOOD ACTOR.

Career of One Who Plays Varied Parts Well.

Malcolm Duncan, who is playing the first heavy part of his stage career and getting away with it, too, in "Yes or No," Arthur Goodrich's drama that is now housed at the Longacre Theatre for the rest of the season, was given his first chance on the stage by Richard Mansfield some twenty years ago.

Duncan was a Brooklyn boy, and when he graduated from Pratt Institute his father got him a job in a wholesale French importing house, then located on White street, Manhattan.

Duncan did not want to learn the importing game, and he told his dad so. He bravely declared he wanted to be an actor. The elder Duncan told his son that most youths suffered from delusions, and wanting to be an actor was not an uncommon form. The boy was advised to stick to his job and learn the ins and outs of the importing game. His thoughts were all on the stage.

The late Richard Mansfield was then in the heyday of his career. He was this country's best known actor, distinguished in his profession, but with a public reputation of being eccentric and intolerant of the shortcomings of others. Mansfield was the greatest actor in the world to Duncan, and he was the one man the stagestruck youth wanted to meet. He knew no one who could give him a letter introducing him to the actor, and he finally decided he would locate Mansfield and ask him to give him a chance on the stage.

Duncan started out on this mission with many misgivings of his reception, even if he were able to find the man he sought. Mansfield's office was then in Twenty-eighth street, just west of Fifth avenue, and it was there the stage aspirant went. Mansfield was in



EMILIE LEA
in
"THE LOVE MILL."



MARGARET ANGLIN
in
"ELECTRA."

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MONDAY—Cohan & Harris present at the Playhouse at the Monday matinee, "The Little Teacher," comedy drama, by Harry James Smith, with Mary Ryan in the leading role.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON—Carnegie Hall: Margaret Anglin will be seen in Sophocles' "Electra," with Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony Orchestra.

THURSDAY—The Forty-eighth Street Theatre: "The Love Mill," comic opera, by Carroll and Francis, will be sung for the first time.

his office and he was alone. Instead of the brusque and sarcastic individual he expected to find, Duncan met the most genial of men, who listened patiently to him and promised he would give him a chance.

Duncan went back to his desk in the importing house and when one week had passed into four he began to despair of ever becoming a member of Mansfield's company. Then came the day when the actor telegraphed him to report for rehearsal. Mansfield was doing "Cyrano de Bergerac" then and he assigned Duncan to one of the musketeers. It wasn't much of a part—it only had eight speaking lines—but it was a start and Mansfield had kept his word to give the youth a chance.

Duncan remained with Mansfield for two seasons playing small parts and then the actor advised him to leave and join a company where he would have an opportunity to play big parts.

"Mr. Mansfield taught me the rudiments of the game, and as there were no roles in any of his plays that a youngster could do he advised me to get out and join a barnstorming company and play leads. 'When you get the experience you need create parts, don't follow others in roles,' was the advice he gave me and it was good advice, too. Following his advice I joined a one night stand repertoire company touring the South and I stuck with it two years. It was after this experience that I got my first real chance with the No. 2 Company of 'The Climbers'."

"The Climbers," Amelia Bingham had seen me work and engaged me. It was pretty easy sailing after that. I came to New York and the late Henry B. Harris engaged me. I was under his management for eight years, playing all his productions, including 'The Lion and the Mouse' and 'The Third Degree'."

"I was the leading man with Mrs. Pike when she did 'Mrs. Bumstead' and later created the role of the United States Naval Lieutenant in 'The Pawn,' and every one knows that was a failure. I played opposite Marjorie Wood in that play and it so happens that Marjorie and I are playing opposite now in 'Yes or No'."

"My being on the stage is due entirely to the friendly interest Richard Mansfield took in a stranger. To me he was one of the most wonderful

of men, kindly and considerate of others away from the stage, but a martinet once he was on it. It was always considerate in his social dealings but he detested stupidity and was quick to show it where the work of the stage was concerned. I owe my start to him."

BERNARD AND SUCCESS.

The Popular Comedian Defines.

"What do I call success?" repeated Barney Bernard, the incomparable Abe Potash of "Business Before Pleasure," nearing its two hundredth performance at the Etting Theatre.

"There is but one synonym for success, and that is happiness. There is but one synonym for happiness and that is self-expression."

"People have often asked me why I went on the stage. I answer, 'For the one reason that makes anything worth undertaking—because I love it. The other day a man asked me if I would make a big financial sacrifice to play a part I loved. I have done so a dozen times and I expect to do so many times again.'"

"The trouble with the theatre today is that a vast proportion of people in it are in it for the love of money. It is impossible to follow an artistic calling successfully in this spirit."

"I have been playing Abe Potash for more than four years because I love the part. I have had many opportunities to better myself materially but never so good an opportunity to express myself artistically."

"The kind of character I should like to portray best of all is that of some noted Hebrew character—a philanthropist in a comedy of tears and laughter. You know Montague Glass and Jules Eckert Goodman are now at work on a play in which I am to be starred next season, and I expect that to be the crowning event of my life."

"A word as to my training: I am a graduate of burlesque. My first appearance on the stage was in a burlesque show which opened in Scranton, Pa. I remember an amusing incident connected with that experience. I set your feet upon the threshold of a wonderful dwelling place filled with

every sort of treasure and surrounded by a garden that gave your vision a sweep of infinitude, would you want to go back and live in the former environment?" she demanded to know.

"Well, my coming into my present association with Mr. Belasco is like that. Musical comedy was the little house with its poverty of opportunity and its high fence around a tiny garden. The chance that came to me last summer of coming under the direction of this great producer in the field of drama is for all the world like standing in the open door of the beautiful house filled with treasure and surrounded by a garden that has no restrictions."

"I have been so grateful for my success in 'Polly With a Past' principally because it has set me on the high road of dramatic opportunity," she confided. "A musical comedy star may achieve popularity, but she can climb to no permanent greatness. The material in musical comedy does not afford her an opportunity to become a great actress, and if she sticks to that form of musical expression she does not even become a great singer. She may enjoy a wave of popularity for a few years, but that is the most she can expect. I want something more real and substantial than popularity. The dramatic artist has every chance to achieve greatness if she has the ability. The opportunity to go down into the history of the theatre as one of its permanent lights is hers. The hope to do that is the motive power behind the work of every serious worker in the theatre. To turn from the opportunity of such a thing into the field of musical comedy would be equivalent to the thing I have allegorically described in my comparison of the two houses. One would be deliberately exchanging the beauty and wealth of the treasure house for the meagreness of opportunity represented by its antithesis in size and desirability."

"And," added Miss Claire, with assurance, "I am so glad that I have to go back to an outgrown work

day the manager said to me, 'Barney, I don't think you can afford to stay at that hotel.' I said, 'Why not?' 'Never mind,' was the answer, 'but you can't afford it.' So I moved to cheaper quarters. At the end of the week I received \$20."

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"If you lived in a tiny little house the furnishings of which were expressive of its limitations; whose garden was a miniature plot surrounded by a high fence over which you could not see, and one day somebody came and set your feet upon the threshold of a wonderful dwelling place filled with

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"I have been so grateful for my success in 'Polly With a Past' principally because it has set me on the high road of dramatic opportunity," she confided. "A musical comedy star may achieve popularity, but she can climb to no permanent greatness. The material in musical comedy does not afford her an opportunity to become a great actress, and if she sticks to that form of musical expression she does not even become a great singer. She may enjoy a wave of popularity for a few years, but that is the most she can expect. I want something more real and substantial than popularity. The dramatic artist has every chance to achieve greatness if she has the ability. The opportunity to go down into the history of the theatre as one of its permanent lights is hers. The hope to do that is the motive power behind the work of every serious worker in the theatre. To turn from the opportunity of such a thing into the field of musical comedy would be equivalent to the thing I have allegorically described in my comparison of the two houses. One would be deliberately exchanging the beauty and wealth of the treasure house for the meagreness of opportunity represented by its antithesis in size and desirability."

"And," added Miss Claire, with assurance, "I am so glad that I have to go back to an outgrown work

day the manager said to me, 'Barney, I don't think you can afford to stay at that hotel.' I said, 'Why not?' 'Never mind,' was the answer, 'but you can't afford it.' So I moved to cheaper quarters. At the end of the week I received \$20."